Minutes of the Northwest Washington Synod's Thirty-fourth Assembly Saturday, May 18, 2024 Grace Lutheran Church, Des Moines, WA

Approved at the September 21, 2024 meeting of the Synod Council

Opening of the Assembly/Call to Order

Opening worship began at 9 a.m. **Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee** called the Assembly to Order at the close of our Opening Worship at 10:20 a.m.

PLENARY 1

Welcome/Introductions/Orientation

The bishop officially welcomed all gathered and introduced former bishop, **the Rev. Chris Boerger**, who is serving in the role of parliamentarian for the assembly. She then introduced **Courtney Stepp**, chairperson of the Assembly Planning Team, and invited her to the microphone for sharing some important points by way of orientation to the space and the day's procedures. Courtney acknowledged and thanked today's ushers, volunteers from Grace Lutheran serving in various capacities and, finally, our synod's Director for Events and Communication, **Susan Berg**.

Credentials Report

The bishop thanked and introduced the assembly registrar, **Josh Judd-Herzfeldt**, and invited him to the microphone to give the first Credentials Report:

As of 10:30 am we have 273 voting members checked in.

Adoption of Proposed Agenda

Moved and Carried (Hereafter, abbreviated as **MC**)

SA24.05.01 to approve the Synod Assembly Agenda as presented.

Adoption of Proposed Standing Rules

MC

SA24.05.02 to approve the Synod Assembly Standing Rules as presented.

Nominating Committee Report

Pr. Rick Rouse, chair of the Nominating Committee, was called upon to give the report of the Nominating Committee.

- He thanked the members of the committee who put together the slate of this year's nominees. The following served as members of the committee: Debbie Trafton O'Neal, Pr. Kristi Lambing, Nisar Stephen, Pr. Scott Brents, Bp. Shelley Bryan Wee, and Susan Berg.
- Nominees will be elected to serve in a variety of roles. He then reviewed the areas of nomination.
    - Five persons will be elected to serve on the **Committee on Discipline**; electing four members to 5-year terms and one member to fill a 1-year vacated term.
    - Four members will be elected to the **Consultation Committee**; all to 5-year terms.
    - Nine persons will be elected to serve on **Synod Council**; the youth position is 2-year term; all others are 3-year terms.

  - Seven people will be elected to serve as **2025 Churchwide Assembly voting members** in addition to the bishop and the Vice President.
- All nominees were thanked for the willingness to share their gifts with Christ's church.

Elections – Ballot One

Pr. Paul Stumme-Diers, chair of the Elections Committee, was called upon to introduce the first ballot. Ballot 1 consisted of the nominees for the Youth, Young Adult and Rostered Minister categories for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members. On the ballot slate in these categories were:

- Youth (vote for one)
  - Seth Lambing (Pointe of Grace, Mukilteo)
- Young Adult (vote for one)
  - Dante Austin (Immanuel, Seattle)
  - Kasey Shultz (Columbia City Church of Hope, Seattle)
- Rostered Ministers (vote for two)
  - Rev. Paul Eldred (Central, Seattle)
  - Rev. Ivar Hillesland (Church of the Apostles, Seattle)
  - Rev. Kristi Lambing (Fir-Conway, Mount Vernon)
  - Rev. Rick Rouse (Our Savior, Everett)

Ushers were asked to distribute ballots. Ballot 1 was cast for the above categories of Churchwide Assembly voting members.

The bishop declared the voting closed. While votes were collected, a video was shown about Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) with a message from President Allan Belton.

Rick Steves, member of Trinity, Lynnwood, was introduced as our official door prize drawer. This was the first of subsequent prizes presented throughout the assembly. This first drawing was for a Swag Bag donated by PLU.

Report of the Bishop

Bp. Shelley Bryan Wee turned over the gavel (leadership of the assembly) to Vice President Kay Edgerton, so that she could step into a participatory role to give her report to the assembly.

The bishop acknowledged and thanked the synod staff and presented six videos to highlight important ministry taking place throughout the synod this past year.

- The first video highlighted those areas of our mission led and presented by Director for Evangelical Mission, Pr. Judy Brennan:
  - **Bishop's Report: Cultivating Sacred Spaces**
  - Among other things, it emphasized that sacred places are where people come to find connection; the next sacred space event will be at Emmaus' Table; it will offer the opportunity to gather in cohorts with practitioners and pastors who are in the process of cultivating sacred spaces.
- The bishop reported that many clusters in the synod are seeking ways to collaborate and work together. The next video highlighted ways in which two congregations, Peace Lutheran, Silvana and Camano Lutheran, Camano Island have realized that they are stronger together.
  - **Bishop's Report: Stillaguamish Cluster Story**

- Ongoing within the synod are conversations, partnerships, and the sharing of visions of how we work with ecumenical partners, specifically, the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church.
- It takes time, vision, and money to carry out new ministry and sustain existing congregational ministry; the bishop expressed gratitude for grants initiated by former Bp. Kirby Unti. She then introduced the next video explaining new granting categories we can access in partnership with the ELCA.
    - **Bishop's Report: Grants Support Ministry**
    - There are now three categories of grants: 1) Evangelical Initiatives providing up to $5,000; 2) Congregational Outreach Ministries providing up to $10,000, and 3) Synod Authorized Outreach Ministries providing up to $25,000.
- God calls us to be caretakers of the land we are on; there are many property matters that need expertise on the synod and congregational levels; thus, we have contracted with **Jay Edgerton** as Director of Properties to be a resource for us in this area.
- Living into Vocational Engagement (LiVE) Project invites congregations to join the project for minimal cost, so that all their members may participate in online classes. Here's a video on the work and aspirations of LiVE.
    - **Bishop's Report: the LiVE Project**
- Lay Ministry Formation (LMF) is an intentional process over a two-year period for deeper, guided leadership. It was developed to equip and train lay leaders to lead in congregations and more intentionally live into God's call. Currently there are nine members in the first LMF cohort. This video shares more about LMF.
    - **Bishop's Report: Lay Ministry Formation**
- We currently have 20 candidates in the process of candidacy in response to a call to public ministry within the ELCA. A slide was projected with pictures of newly ordained pastors and deacons within the synod.
- Synod Authorized Lay Ministers (SALMs) are distinct from those participating in LMF. They are called to do public, pastoral ministry in a specific site for a specific period and are required to participate in two years of LMF in addition to other requirements. Pr. David Hahn and Pr. Andy Yee are collaborating on this process as well as working with other synods.
- Two years ago, we had 20 rostered vacancies in the synod; now, we have only six. A slide was projected with pictures of new deacons and pastors who have accepted calls in the past two years. We are committed to continue working with congregations in transition; prayerfully considering new ways when traditional modes don't seem to work; working with ecumenical, full communion partners; and lifting up SALMs.
- We acknowledge that the legacy lives on for the following congregations who underwent Holy Closure over the past two years: Glendale Lutheran, Burien, 80 years; Shepherd of the Hill Lutheran, Concrete, 67 years; Clearbrook Lutheran, 121 years; Holy Cross Lutheran, Bellevue, 54 years; Lake Stevens Lutheran, Lake Stevens, 38 years; Central Lutheran, Bellingham, 69 years.
- By way of introducing a video about campus ministry at the University of Washington, the bishop shared how they have combined two ministries together, a story of faithful partnership.
    - **Bishop's Report: Campus Ministry**
- Crossroads is an organization with which we have contracted to help us become more anti-racist. See the information in the Assembly Guidebook to see when we will be meeting to do this work. Please know there is much work to be done; we are called to listen and learn in this majority, white synod.

- The bishop reflected on her work outside the synod with other judicatories in other places, specifically via two trips: 1) a trip to the Holy Land in 2023, and 2) a trip to the U.S./Mexico border in February of 2024.
    - She was initially planning to travel with a group from our synod to the Holy Land in 2024; this did not happen because of the war in Gaza. She stated that what is happening there does not fit within God's justice and love; there is no place for the indiscriminate killing of Palestinian women and children; there is no place for antisemitism. The Holy Land is part of us; we are part of people in the Holy Land. We need to listen as we advocate for true peace.
    - During her trip to Las Cruces, NM the group with which she traveled met with the Border Servant Corp and Border Control. She lifted up our ELCA social message on Immigration (updated in 2020) and the statement of the ELCA strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunity (AMPARO).
- She referenced and encouraged the reading of two letters recently drafted by The Conference of Bishops: 1) Calling for a Cease Fire in Gaza, and 2) Calling for Immigration Reform
- She also referenced the draft ELCA Social Statement on Civic Life and Faith. This statement points us to a faithful way of how we engage with one another.
- Thank you for entrusting us to be the church together through your Mission Support.
- The bishop expressed gratitude for the NWWA Synod Staff. She recognized the contributions of those who left or retired in the past two years: Dcn. Dianne Johnson, Pr. Herb Shao, Traci Hall, and Laura Sasaki Norton. She also commended those new to the Synod Staff: Pr. Judy Brennan (officially installed at today's opening worship), Tabetha Myatt, Jay Edgerton, and Mandy Neill. Finally, she gave thanks for all who have been serving and continue to serve: Pr. Andy Yee, Pr. David Hahn and Susan Berg.
- In closing the bishop reminded us that God is a God of love and care who never slumbers and sleeps; and God is with us on all our journeys. She is honored and grateful to be called into her office as bishop.

Vice President Kay returned the gavel (leadership of the assembly) back to the bishop.

Ministry Moments and Spirit Stories

Reiterating how the Spirit is at work in our synod, the bishop donned a headband with tongues of flames to introduce the first of multiple "spirit stories" stipulating that those sharing have the distinguished honor of receiving the crown of flames to also don while sharing their ministry moment. Representatives from Gethsemane, Seattle were invited forward, given the flames and invited to share.

- Rachel Segerhammer and Juan Carlos came forward. Rachel shared that over the last several years they have had a growing number of people who speak Spanish; in fact, Spanish speakers are almost equal to English speakers. Thus, they have become bi-lingual in their approach to worship. Juan Carlos then shared his perspective on this ministry speaking in Spanish. When he finished, Rachel stated that a translation of what Juan had shared would not be provided, so that non-Spanish speakers have the experience of "hearing but not understanding," as is the case for Spanish speakers who have not yet learned English.

The bishop then welcomed the Secretary forward for her report.

Report of the Synod Secretary

Synod Secretary, Netsie Griffith, referenced her written report in the Assembly Guidebook and commended it to the assembly as a record of Synod Council actions and roster activity over the past two years.

- She thanked the synod for electing her as secretary in 2022 and has found it a privilege to work with such a dedicated synod staff and synod council.
- She then introduced the celebration video of Milestone Anniversaries of Rostered Ministers in 2023 and 2024: **Rostered Minister Anniversary Video**

Elections – Reporting of Ballot 1 and Casting of Ballot 2

Rev. Paul Stumme-Diers was called upon to give the results of the 1st ballot:

For Churchwide Assembly (CWA) Voting Members

Seth Lambing - 266
Dante Austin - 161
Kasey Shultz - 103
Rev. Paul Eldred - 107
Rev. Ivar Hillesland - 132
Rev. Kristi Lambing - 173
Rev. Rick Rouse - 111

The bishop declared as elected: **Seth Lambing (Youth, CWA), Dante Austin (Young Adult, CWA) and Rev. Kristi Lambing (First of two Rostered Ministers, CWA)**

For the Churchwide Assembly Rostered Minister category, there will be a run-off election on Ballot 2 between Rev. Ivar Hillesland and Rev. Rick Rouse, as there were not enough votes to elect for this second position in this category.

The 2nd Ballot consisting of the following was issued:

For Synod Council (SC)

- Youth (vote for one)
  - David Kinner (Pointe of Grace, Mukilteo)
- Young Adult (vote for one)
  - Sam Martinez (Christ the Servant, Bellingham)
- Lay Man (vote for one)
  - Dan Squires (Our Savior's, Everett)
- Lay Woman (vote for one)
  - Sherianne Molzahn Caldwell (Immanuel, Seattle)
- Lay Unrestricted (vote for one)
  - Elly Stitt (Prince of Peace, Shoreline)
- Rostered Minister, Person of Color (POC) or Primary Language other than English (vote for one)
  - Sam Sseba (Prince of Peace, SeaTac)
- Rostered Minister, Deacon (vote for one)
  - Dcn. Luke Allgeyer (Columbia City Church of Hope, Seattle)
- Rostered Ministers (vote for two)
  - Rev. Andy Arnold (Shepherd of the Valley, Maple Valley)
  - Rev. Kevin Bates (Magnolia, Seattle)
  - Rev. Paul Eldred (Central, Seattle)
  - Rev. Jim Killough (Central, Everett)

Ballots were cast and the voting was closed.

A video on Holden Village was shown while ballots were collected. The video was followed by Rick Steves drawing a name and delivering a door prize provided by Holden Village.

Welcoming of the Synod's New Congregation

At last night's Synod Council meeting, the Council approved Hope Church, Lake Stevens, to become a new congregation in our synod.

- Originally a Covenant congregation, Hope began renting space from Holy Cross Lutheran; Holy Cross made the decision to close, but Hope still wished to be in Lake Stevens and become an ELCA congregation.
- Pr. Bill Walles and the members of Hope Church present were invited to stand and receive the welcome of the assembly.

Courtney Stepp shared logistics for lunch including information about ministry specific break-out rooms for those interested. Synod Administrator, Tabetha Myatt, was surprised by the assembly singing "Happy Birthday" to her. This was followed by the singing of our table prayer.

Lunch Break

PLENARY 2

The 50-year anniversary of ELCA World Hunger was acknowledged and gratitude expressed for the years of compassion, caring, and feeding people around the world.

Second Credentials Report

Registrar Josh came forward and reported that **as of 1:19 pm, we had 275 voting members who had checked in.**

Elections – Reporting of Ballot 2 and Casting of Ballot 3

Rev. Paul Stumme-Diers was called upon to give the results of the 2nd ballot:
For Synod Council (SC)
David Kinner – 244
Sam Martinez – 240
Dan Squires – 244
Sherianne Molzahn Caldwell – 241
Elly Stitt – 243
Sam Sseba – 244
Dcn. Luke Allgeyer – 244
Rev. Andy Arnold – 143
Rev. Kevin Bates – 106
Rev. Paul Eldred – 166
Rev. Jim Killough – 63
For the 2nd Rostered Minister for CW Assembly
Rev. Ivar Hillesland – 153
Rev. Rick Rouse - 94

In the SC Rostered Minister category 120 votes were needed to elect.
The bishop declared as elected: **David Kinner** (Youth), **Sam Martinez** (Young Adult), **Dan Squires** (Lay, Man), **Sherianne Molzahn Caldwell** (Lay Woman), **Elly Stitt** (Lay Unrestricted), **Sam Sseba** (Rostered

Minister, POC), **Dcn. Luke Allgeyer** (Rostered Minister – Deacon), **Rev. Andy Arnold** (Rostered Minister), **Rev. Paul Eldred** (Rostered Minister), and **Rev. Ivar Hillesland** (CWA 2nd Rostered Minister position)

The 3rd Ballot consisting of the following was issued:
For Churchwide Assembly (CWA) Voting Members

- Laypersons (Vote for three)
    - Sherianne Molzahn Caldwell (Immanuel, Seattle)
    - Steven Chapman (Central, Seattle)
    - Dan Clements (Our Savior's, Everett)
    - Rachel Pritchett (Bethany, Bainbridge Island)
    - Kasey Shultz (Columbia City Church of Hope, Seattle)
    - Nisar Stephen (Grace, Des Moines)
    - Elly Stitt (Prince of Peace, Shoreline)

For Committee on Discipline

- Lay Persons – 5-year terms (vote for two)
    - David Foster-Koth (Faith, Seattle)
    - Bob Spencer (Our Savior's, Everett)
- Rostered Ministers – 5-year terns (vote for two)
    - Rev. Glen Aaberg (Northlake, Kenmore)
    - Rev. Jory Mickelson (Faith, Bellingham)
- Rostered Minister – 1-year term (vote for one)
    - Dcn. Marie Preftes-Arenz (Faith of North Lakewood, Marysville)
    - Rev. Nyla Schoeld (Sammamish Hills, Sammamish)

For Consultation Committee

- Lay Persons (Vote for two)
    - John Fairbairn (Faith, Bellingham)
    - Eric Peoples (First, Bothell)
- Rostered Ministers (Vote for two)
    - Rev. Beth Eden (Lutheran Church in the San Juans, San Juan Islands)
    - Rev. Katherine GrayBuck (Church of the Apostles, Seattle)
    - Rev. Kari Lipke (Gethsemane, Seattle)

Ballots were cast and the voting was closed.

A video on the Faith Action Network was shown while ballots were collected. The bishop expressed gratitude for the faithful advocacy work of the Faith Action Network (FAN). Elise DeGooyer of FAN was recognized for her service and awarded a "Hope Glassy Baby."

The new leadership of Pr. Kevin Beebe, recently called to serve as Executive Director at Camp Lutherwood, was acknowledged. Unfortunately, Kevin was not able to be in attendance, but Sam Martinez, Guest Services Director at Camp Lutherwood, was present and acknowledged.

Camp Lutherwood provided a great package of items for a door prize for which Rick Steves drew a name and delivered the prize.

The bishop invited Vice President, Kay Edgerton, to come to the podium to present both her report as Vice President and the Report for the Churchwide Organization.

Report of the Synod Vice President

- Kay clarified that her role as synod Vice President is to serve as the chair of Synod Council.
- She reflected back that in 2022, synod assembly approved memorials to forward to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, one of which was to encourage the support of creative programs for land-back initiatives to indigenous peoples. Another was for the ELCA to conduct an audit of the organizational structure along the guidelines of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.
- This year's Synod Council has formed an Assessment Team for doing our own work evaluating our own organizational structure for diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB).
- The council has also formed a committee to review policies.
- Just recently, we have re-committed with the assistance of Reconciling Works to be recognized as a Reconciling in Christ Synod.
- She thanked those who have served on Synod Council whose terms have concluded or soon will be concluding: Curt Eidem, Rebecca Langholz, Ivar Hillesland, Kelly Peterson, and Dante Austin
- Finally, she thanked the Assembly for their support and work.

ELCA Churchwide Report

- Kay moved on to present the report provided to us by the ELCA.
- It began with a video narrated by Bishop Elizabeth Eaton: **ELCA Churchwide Video**
- It was then pointed out that through our generosity as a synod, the ELCA Churchwide Organization receives $616,000 in Mission Support.
- Not only do we provide financial support, but the following members of our synod serve at the churchwide level: **Rev. Joanne Engquist** (member of ELCA Church Council), **Lana Obie** (member of the Committee on Appeals), **Rev. Mia Baumgartner** (member of the Committee on Discipline), **Rev. Tor Berg** (member of the Committee on Discipline}, **Rev. Wm. Chris Boerger** (serves the Mission Investment Fund), and **Stacy Kitahata** (member of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church)
- Our synod also contributed $267,084 to the total amount of $20,000,000 raised through ELCA World Hunger to support hunger and poverty relief ministries in 2023.
- Another way in which our synod participates in the mission of the ELCA both globally and domestically is through Lutheran Disaster Response. Of the total $13,500,000 raised in 2023, our synod contributed $283,699.
- 2023 marked the 10-year anniversary of the "God's Work Our Hands" initiative; participating in acts of service in our communities is one way we live out our calling as Lutherans to share God's grace and love. Thanks for showing up in your communities.
- The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) was formed in response to a mandate to re-consider the statement of purpose for each unit of the churchwide organization.
    - It was tasked with giving particular attention to dismantling racism.
    - The CRLC has met five times, engaged in over 60 listening sessions and is preparing recommendations for a faithful path forward.
    - Its report and recommendations will be brought to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.
- The ELCA's largest event happens this summer in New Orleans, as, once again, youth throughout the ELCA, will be welcomed to the city for the ELCA Youth Gathering, "Created to Be."
- Thanks, NWWA Synod, on behalf of the ELCA for all you do.

The bishop thanked Kay for her report and all she does on behalf of the synod.

Another video was introduced by the bishop which speaks to the prior and ongoing work of the ELCA Peace Not Walls campaign to provide accompaniment, advocacy, and awareness-raising with our partners in the Holy Land and in the United States. In October 2023 it was decided that this campaign would be renamed and reconfigured as a new initiative, **Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel**. *Sumud* is an Arabic word meaning "steadfastness." Hear about it in this video: **Sumud**

- Pray for the *Sumud* of Palestinian Christians and that justice may become a reality for all Palestinians and Israelis.
- The Rev. Meghan Johnston Aelabouni, narrator of the video was just elected Bp. of the Rocky Mountain Synod.

Synod Constitution Amendments

The assembly's attention was directed to the constitutional changes that have come to us from the ELCA 2022 Churchwide Assembly; generally, the changes include clarification and language clean up; they have been forwarded to us by the synod council and do not require a second.

The bishop called for a vote on the motion as presented.

MC

SA24.05.03 to approve the constitutional amendments recommended by the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly for Synod Constitutions.

Congregational Anniversaries Noted

The following congregations who had milestone anniversaries sometime between the 2022 Synod Assembly up through this year were noted and celebrated with a power point presentation.

- 50 Years – Christ the Servant, Bellingham and Lord of Life, Renton
- 75 Years - Bethel, Shoreline; Faith, Everett; Holy Trinity, Mercer Island and Mt. Si, North Bend
- 125 years - Bethlehem, Marysville

We are blessed to have several care facilities in our synod. A video was shown on how a grant from the synod helped one of our care centers, **Josephine Caring Community in Stanwood**, reach out to their residents and the community around them.

Rick came forward to draw a name for a lucky recipient to receive a Gift Basket from Josephine Caring Community and presented it.

Reference and Counsel Committee Report

No resolutions were received this year, so there was no report. Committee Chair, Rev. Tor Berg and the committee, were thanked for being prepared to receive resolutions had they been forthcoming. It was also mentioned that Pr. Berg is also the synod's consultant for questions or information about congregational constitutions.

A video was shown about the organization, **Paths to Understanding (PTU)**, whose Executive Director is Rev. Terry Kyllo. Because of attending a funeral in Idaho, Pr. Kyllo was unable to be with us. In his message in the video Pr. Kyllo expressed it was an honor to partner with the synod. PTU is offering three activities this year: 1) Potluck for Democracy, 2) Let's Go Together (a service project), 3) and the reading of the book, "Go and Do Likewise"

Crossroads Partnership Video to introduce Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging (DEIB) Assessment

- Based on our partnership with Crossroads, the synod is just beginning its DEIB Assessment work.
- The video presented six different Antiracist Ways of Being
    - Becoming aware that race influences how we imagine, lead & make decisions; people of color are proportionally disadvantaged.
    - Antiracism involves seeing how institutions maintain systemic racism; power analysis helps us to locate racism.
    - Grounded in practices that challenge white supremacy; being accountable to communities of color.
    - Sustained by intentional practices of status quo requires us becoming uncomfortable in working towards new ways of being.
    - Racism operates alongside other forms of identity issues (sexism, homophobia, etc.)
    - Requires awareness of how the whole earth is impacted by racist ideologies.

The bishop pointed out that in the Guidebook App and on the assembly page of the synod website the questions asked at the end of the video can be found and attendees were invited to prayerfully think about these questions.

One of our synod leadership teams, Strategic Team for Authentic Diversity (STAD), is a resource to our synod. You will find resources from them on our synod website. They have put together a door prize.

Rick came forward to draw a name to receive the STAD door prize and delivered it.

Ministry Moments and Spirit Stories

Amanda Bedsaul from St. Matthew's, Renton, was invited to the podium to don the red flame head band and share her "Spirit Story." She shared how a book reading group from her congregation reading the book*, Call to Allyship: Preparing your Congregation for Leaders of Color*, has impacted her life and the life of the congregation. She acknowledged that anti-racism work makes her uncomfortable but it is necessary. St. Matthew's has recently called Pr. Rachel San Diego, and thus their work is just beginning and continuing. She commended this book to all interested in engaging in this work.

The red flame headband was then passed to **Pr. Kristi Lambing from Fir Conway, Mount Vernon,** who, with a deep love for archery, the discovery of a faith-based archery program, and the partnership of others, has begun Archery Church at Fir Conway. Bowman Bay Archery has been a great resource for them and encouraged them in this new endeavor.

A video was provided by **Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW)** lifting up the story of Isabel, one of many stories of those helped by LCSNW. The bishop noted that in her written report she referenced the legacy Central Lutheran Church in Bellingham has left by selling their facility to LCSNW.

Another affiliate of LCSNW is **Compass Housing**. A video was shared in which President Michael Bailey spoke of the work of Compass Housing. Compass Housing also provided us with five door prizes.

Once again, Rick bounded to the stage to draw five names to present these door prizes.

Elections – Reporting of Ballot 3 and Casting of Ballot 4

Rev. Paul Stumme-Diers was called upon to give the results of the 3rd ballot:

CWA Voting Members

Sherianne Caldwell – 100

Steven Chapman – 76

Dan Clements – 78
Rachel Pritchett – 119
Kasey Shultz – 108
Nisar Stephen – 104
Elly Stitt – 108
Committee on Discipline
David Foster-Koth – 247
Bob Spencer – 246
Glen Aaberg – 242
Jory Mickelson – 244
Marie Preftes-Arnez – 125
Nyla Schoeld – 99
Consultation Committee
John Fairbairn – 243
Eric Peoples – 239
Beth Eden – 127
Katherine GrayBuck – 166
Kari Lipke - 178

For CWA, 116 votes were needed to elect, so Sherianne Caldwell, Kasey Shultz, Nisar Stephen and Elly Stitt will be placed on Ballot 4 for a run off election for the last two lay spots for CWA voting members.

The bishop declared as elected: **Rachel Pritchett** (CWA lay voting member), **David Foster-Koth** (Committee on Discipline lay member, 5-year term), **Bob Spencer** (Committee on Discipline lay member, 5-year term), **Rev. Glen Aaberg** (Committee on Discipline rostered member, 5-year term), **Rev. Jory Mickelson** (Committee on Discipline rostered member, 5-year term), **Dcn. Marie Preftes-Arenz** (Committee on Discipline rostered member, 1-year term), **John Fairbairn** (Consultation Committee lay member), **Eric Peoples** (Consultation Committee lay member), **Rev. Katherine GrayBuck** (Consultation Committee rostered member), and **Rev. Kari Lipke** (Consultation Committee rostered member)

The 4th Run Off Ballot consisting of the following was issued:
For Churchwide Assembly (CWA) Voting Members

- Laypersons (Vote for two)
    - Sherianne Molzahn Caldwell (Immanuel, Seattle)
    - Kasey Shultz (Columbia City Church of Hope, Seattle)
    - Nisar Stephen (Grace, Des Moines)
    - Elly Stitt (Prince of Peace, Shoreline)

Ballots were cast and the voting was closed.

A Hunger Team video featuring our friends at Faith Family Village (from a KOMO News link) was shown while ballots were collected.

Afternoon Break

PLENARY 3

Final Credentials Report

Registrar Josh was invited forward for the final and full Credentials Report.
As of 3:01 pm – 275 voting members were present:

- 170 lay
  - 96 women
  - 70 men
  - 4 non-binary
- 105 rostered ministers
  - 7 Word and Service (deacons)
  - 98 Word and Sacrament (pastors)
- 28 Persons of Color or whose language is other than English
- 8 youth (not yet 18)
- 15 young adults (between 18-30)
- 6 observers
- 56 visitors, and
- a "gazoodle" of volunteers (Susan Berg's adjective)

Elections – Reporting of Ballot 4

Rev. Paul Stumme-Diers was called upon to give the results of the 4th ballot:
CWA Layperson Run-off – Votes needed to elect 126
Sherianne Caldwell – 102
Kasey Shultz - 145
Nisar Stephen - 131
Elly Stitt – 122

The bishop declared as elected: **Kasey Shultz** (CWA lay voting member) and **Nisar Stephen** (CWA lay voting member)

A video featuring Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Washington was shown. The bishop thanked and acknowledged our synod's campus pastors: Pr. Chelsea Globe and Pr. Joseph Li at the University of Washington, and Pr. Joel Langholz at Western Washington University.

Both campus ministries, UW and WWU, provided door prizes. Two names were drawn by Rick and delivered.

Report of the Treasurer

Treasurer Bart Brosten gave the current Treasurer's Report and presented the NWWA 2025 Proposed Budget. He shared that:

- The Finance Committee came up with a budget to pay synod staff guidelines, but they were uncomfortable with the jump, so they dropped that and came up with something that meets them at 88% of guidelines.
- They are presenting a budget of $1,660,825
  - This includes $1,363,325 as Mission Support which is a 2% annual increase; the Finance Committee feels this is realistic.

A slide was projected showing the following portions: Churchwide, 43%; Agency & Social Min, 10%; Shared Missions\Region 1, 4%; Board/Comm./Task, 0%; Compensation and Benefits, 44% (an increase of 4.5%); Travel & Accommodations, 4%; totaling $1,660,825.

Bart entertained questions from the floor. Concern was expressed about the synod not paying staff at guidelines when congregations are encouraged to do so. It was voiced that the synod should model behavior that it expects of congregations.

Moved, Seconded and Carried

SA24.05.04 to amend the 2025 NWWA Synod Budget to increase staff compensation to 100% of guidelines to come from surplus income or reserves.

MC

SA24.05.05 that the General Fund Budget adopted for Fiscal Year 2025 (ending January 31, 2026), as amended, be approved at $1,718,925 and that Fiscal Year 2025 (ending January 31, 2026) General Fund receipts more than $1,804,877 be disbursed as directed by the Synod Council.

The bishop thanked Bart and the Finance Committee for their diligent work to keep us faithful to the healthy stewardship of our resources as a synod. She also thanked congregations and members of the synod for their continued mission support.

Ministry Moments and Spirit Stories

The red flame headband came out once again, as the bishop invited **Pr. Mark Griffith** forward to share another "Spirit Story."

He shared that the East King County Cluster wondered what might happen if they became a parish. It is something that is lay driven, not just rostered people, and done with the idea that they would get bigger. They would see the bigger picture: being united but not uniform. The parish is to serve the cluster and community; it might have more sites than there are pastors. It would utilize lay leadership and allow for doing innovative things; in some ways it is an old configuration but being thought of anew. They are not doing it because they are afraid; they believe it is the right thing to do.

A video had been prepared by the Coaches Northwest Team, but there were technical difficulties preventing it being shown. Gratitude was expressed for our cadre of coaches and their work with congregations and individuals.

Because Coaches Northwest also provided a door prize, Rick was called upon one last time to draw a name and deliver their door prize.

The red flame headband made one final appearance as **Becky Cole,** a Children, Youth and Family Minister in our synod was invited up to share the story of SKY which stands for Sno-King Youth. It is a group for youth, leaders, and parents. They have taken an innovative approach of rotating sites and activities across church boundaries. Thus, it stretches from Seattle to Lake Stevens. It began with six youth, and at last gathering there were 40 youth.

It was reported that the Coaches Northwest Video is now working, so it was shown.

Bishop's Reflections
The bishop announced that all videos shown during the assembly will be shared via the synod website

Because during next year's assembly we will be holding the election of the bishop, it will be all-day Friday and all-day Saturday, May 16-17, 2025.

The bishop then announced that, after prayerful reflection, she will stand for a second term.

She expressed gratitude to Courtney and Susan for all the planning and detailed work.

A video that was to be shown earlier was shown: it was prepared by the synod's Youth and Family Ministry Committee.

Assembly Chair Closing Remarks and Thank Yous
Assembly Chair, Courtney Stepp, came forward to thank all who helped make the day possible: the worship planning team, all the committees, the registrars and their team of volunteers, usher volunteers and the tech staff from Grace.

Thanks was expressed to Senator Karen Keiser, a member of Grace, Des Moines, who is retiring from the Washington State Senate this year.

Adjournment, Blessing and Sending
The Bishop adjourned the assembly at 4:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Netsie N. Griffith
Synod Council Secretary